

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Take a bow for health care support

The people of York Region have achieved a remarkable feat.

Together with our neighbours, community leaders, businesses and government, we have succeeded in bringing much-needed health care services and improvements to our rapidly expanding communities.

Next spring, a new community health centre will open in Vaughan. And just this week, the last bucket of cement was poured on the roof of the 148,000-square-foot expansion of York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill.

In June, Markham Stouffville Hospital opened ITS new Breast Health Centre.

It is time for all members of the community who made this happen to stand up and take a bow.

At the heart of these extraordinary accomplishments lies each hospital's foundation.

They are a dedicated and creative group, made up of a board of directors, community volunteers and staff, who are responsible for encouraging individual and corporate donations in varying amounts.

They also work with government and local health care experts to make sure new services meet the needs of our rapidly growing region.

For example, Vaughan's population is expected to top 300,000 within the next decade and, right now, more than half of them head south to Toronto if they need a hospital, while 36 per cent travel to the neighbouring communities of Richmond Hill and Newmarket.

As York Central Hospital's chief of staff, Larry Grossman, said of the \$36 million raised for its expansion: "This has to be just the beginning. Or, five years from now, we're going to be in the same situation."

At its inaugural gala a week ago appropriately titled Let the Magic Begin, about 1,000 people helped raise close to \$1 million for a state-of-the-art hospital in Vaughan.

Markham Stouffville Hospital's Foundation raises about \$2 million annually to cover its equipment needs.

Raising money on this scale doesn't come easy. Behind the numbers are hundreds of hours of work by volunteers, as well as great ingenuity in dreaming up novel ideas for initiatives to raise the money.

For instance, guests at the Vaughan galas live auction had a chance to bid on naming a new street in Vaughan. Proceeds from next month's 19th annual Celebration of Hope cancer fundraiser will go to Markham's Breast Health Centre.

Who knows what they will dream up next? But one thing is for certain.

We look forward to more fundraising events becoming a regular fixture on our community's calendar for years to come.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Quarter-century of memories and thank-yous

Twenty-five years ago this month, I had never been to Stouffville.

Heard of it, mainly for its mega flea market, but had never been.

Then, an interview and a phone call and I was being asked to help start a new newspaper, the Stouffville Sun, in the community. There was a camera, a typewriter, electric and all, and a desk waiting on Main Street. We would have two weeks to get the first edition on the street.

Stouffville in 1982 was more Mayberry than it is now and, in many ways, that was a good thing. You could walk to the downtown core and purchase all of life's necessities, including prescription drugs, hardware, underwear and groceries, not necessarily in that order.

The western edge of the Main Street shopping adventure ended at the old A&P, now Giant Tiger.

The 404 stopped at Bloomington Road.

The ongoing saga of the day was the closure of a landfill site south of Ballantrae, suspected of poisoning drinking water.

There was one new house on the market; I know, I bought it for well under \$100,000.

Obviously, I bit. Signed the papers and took the job. And we got that first edition out on time, with the help of so many from this community. A bronzed copy of it hangs above my Mac.

There was a bit of cake and a platter packed with memories to toast the occasion last week.

The memories are almost all sweet. Three office locations, three houses, three children and countless friends and contacts in a town that still prides itself on being a community.

Who knows where I'd be if I hadn't said yes to Stouffville 25 years ago? Life's like that.

I do know. I made the correct decision.

Thanks, Stouffville.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Stouffville follows Terry Fox's lead

Our wonderful community is indeed making a difference in cancer research.

This year's Terry Fox Run contributed more than \$85,000 to cancer research. More than 100 volunteers made the community event very efficient and fun and our local schools that participated raised funds and helped spread Terry Fox's message of hope.

Terry Fox asked in 1981 prior to his death, that not one person continue his Marathon of Hope.

Terry asked all Canadians to do their part. Thank you, Stouffville, for following his courageous lead.

SANDY SCHELL KENNEDY
& THE TERRY FOX TEAM
STOUFFVILLE

Challenge issued to new MPP

Open letter to newly elected MPP Dr. Helena Jacek. Congratulations on your recent election victory. On the heels of this election you no doubt have a good grasp of our province's current situation: economic growth but no increase in wealth for the majority of taxpayers.

The GTA's population grows ever larger yet falls further behind in the areas of health care wait times, traffic congestion, green space, air quality, availability of quality affordable long term care, and in many basic services.

Given your background in public health, I look forward to reading headlines someday such as: "MPP Jacek takes aim at poverty and educates government officials and public on the severe health effects of poverty and marginalization."

Until this day comes, any and all public policy initiatives dealing with the above issues (just to name a few), like all the others, will forever remain on the sidelines.

Our province's public policy focus in these areas will continue to be on lifestyle choices while the economic and social conditions for individuals (widely recognized as the determinants of health) will continue to deteriorate.

Helena, I look forward to you taking up this challenge. You are in an excellent position to make some real progress here. Good luck.

KEN PRENTICE
STOUFFVILLE

Visitors, artists, sponsors backed tour

We wish to thank all the people who helped to make the seventh annual Whitchurch-Stouffville Studio Tour such a tremendous success.

To the visitors, both local and from afar, we thank you for coming into the homes and studios of our participating artists. All were friendly, encouraging and voiced their enjoyment with the tour.

To our sponsors, we acknowledge your generous financial support. Thank you for taking the opportunity for your services and products to be promoted along with the Tour, with the Tour Guide, and website.

Thank you to The Sun-Tribune for the comprehensive coverage. And finally, thanks to all the artists who worked diligently all year, not only to organize the tour, but to keep a high standard of craftsmanship in their creative endeavours. See you next year.

RAY MCNEICE
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE STUDIO TOUR

LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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